

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A method for generating and distributing a digital photographic proof, said method comprising the steps of:

3 generating an altered image by altering original image  
4 data to produce altered image data;

5 storing said altered image data in an electronic file;

storing encrypted instructions in said file with said altered image data, said instructions describing a method for reversing an alteration method utilized to alter said original image to produce said altered image data;

produce a digital photographic proof utilizing said file by displaying said altered image, wherein all users are permitted to view said altered image; and

13 permitting only authorized users to utilize said  
14 encrypted instructions to reproduce said original image from  
15 said altered image data, wherein only authorized users may  
16 reproduce said original image, and further wherein said  
17 single electronic file is utilized to both produce a digital  
18 photographic proof and to reproduce said original image.

1       2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the  
2       steps of:

3               providing a decryption key in response to a user  
4       purchasing a right to reproduce said original image from  
5       said altered image, wherein said user becomes an authorized  
6       user in response to said purchase; and

7               utilizing said decryption key to decrypt said encrypted  
8       instructions, wherein only authorized users may decrypt said  
9       encrypted instructions.

3       3. The method according to claim 2, further comprising the  
4       step of capturing said original image utilizing a digital  
5       camera.

3       4. The method according to claim 3, further comprising the  
4       steps of:

3               generating said instructions describing said method for  
4       reversing said alteration method;

5               encrypting said instructions;

6               appending said encrypted instructions to said altered  
7       image data; and

8               storing said encrypted instructions and said altered  
9       image together in said file.

1       5. The method according to claim 3, further comprising the  
2       step of storing original image data outside of said camera,  
3       said original image data required in order to reproduce said  
4       original image.

1       6. The method according to claim 5, further comprising the  
2       steps of:

3               3       selecting said alteration method to use to alter said  
4       original image data;

3               4       altering said original image data to produce said  
4       altered image data; and

3               5       storing said altered image data in said electronic  
4       file.

3       7. The method according to claim 6, further comprising the  
4       steps of:

3               3       generating said instructions describing said method for  
4       reversing said alteration method;

5               5       encrypting said instructions;

6               6       appending said encrypted instructions to said altered  
7       image data; and

8               7       storing said encrypted instructions and said altered  
9       image together in said file.

1       8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the  
2       step of distributing said digital photographic proof in a  
3       digital format to a potential purchaser utilizing a floppy  
4       diskette.

1       9. A system for generating and distributing a digital  
2       photographic proof, comprising:

3               means for generating an altered image by altering  
4       original image data to produce altered image data;

5               means for storing said altered image data in an  
6       electronic file;

7               means for storing encrypted instructions in said file  
8       with said altered image data, said instructions describing a  
9       method for reversing an alteration method utilized to alter  
10      said original image to produce said altered image data;

11       means for produce a digital photographic proof  
12      utilizing said file by displaying said altered image,  
13      wherein all users are permitted to view said altered image;  
14      and

15       permitting only authorized users to utilize said  
16      encrypted instructions to reproduce said original image from  
17      said altered image data utilizing said file, wherein only  
18      authorized users may reproduce said original image, and  
19      further wherein said single electronic file is utilized to  
20      both produce a digital photographic proof and to reproduce  
21      said original image.

1 10. The system according to claim 9, further comprising:

2 means for providing a decryption key in response to a  
3 user purchasing a right to produce said original image from  
4 said altered image, wherein said user becomes an authorized  
5 user in response to said purchase; and

6 means for utilizing said decryption key to decrypt said  
7 encrypted instructions, wherein only authorized users may  
8 decrypt said encrypted instructions.

9 11. The system according to claim 10, further comprising a  
12 digital camera for capturing said original image.

13 12. The system according to claim 11, further comprising:

14 means for generating said instructions describing said  
15 method for reversing said alteration method;

16 means for encrypting said instructions;

17 means for appending said encrypted instructions to said  
18 altered image data; and

19 means for storing said encrypted instructions and said  
20 altered image together in said file.

21 13. The system according to claim 11, further comprising  
22 means for storing original image data outside of said  
23 camera, said original image data required in order to  
24 reproduce said original image.

1       14. The system according to claim 13, further comprising:

2               means for selecting said alteration method to use to  
3               alter said original image data;

4               means for altering said original image data to produce  
5               said altered image data; and

6               means for storing said altered image data in said  
7               electronic file.

15. The system according to claim 14, further comprising:

1               means for generating said instructions describing said  
2               method for reversing said alteration method;

3               means for encrypting said instructions;

4               means for appending said encrypted instructions to said  
5               altered image data; and

6               means for storing said encrypted instructions and said  
7               altered image together in said file.

16. The system according to claim 9, further comprising a  
2               floppy diskette storing said file for distributing said  
3               digital photographic proof in a digital format to a  
4               potential purchaser.